

2 Samuel 15:12-37 - Thursday, April 30th, 2015

- Last week we ended with verse 11 because the narrative turns a corner of sorts related to Absalom recruiting for his rebellion.
- We'll pick it up here in verse 12, where we're introduced to Ahithophel who used to be David's chief advisor and trusted friend.
- Sadly, Ahithophel will join Absalom and seek to mete out revenge against David for what he had done to his granddaughter.

12 Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city—from Giloh—while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy grew strong, for the people with Absalom continually increased in number.

- It's important to keep in mind that at this point, David is still unaware of Absalom's growing rebellion as it continues to increase.
- As far as David is concerned Absalom with David's approval, is in Hebron making good on a vow that he had made to the Lord.
- If this weren't bad enough, David is about to learn the truth concerning both his son Absalom, and his friend Ahithophel as well.

Charles Spurgeon - "Ahithophel was the intimate friend as well as the counselor of David but he appears to have selfishly gone over to the faction of the young prince, because he judged it to be stronger than the party of the king. Thus David was brought into sore distress, his friends were forsaking him, his enemy was growing stronger and aiming to dethrone him; and worst of all, that enemy was his favorite son. What mists and black days befell David after he so sadly swerved from the way of holiness."

13 Now a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."

- For the first time David is apprised of all that's happened by way of a messenger telling him the men's hearts are with Absalom.
- We know from the previous verses that the reason the hearts of the men of Israel were with Absalom is because he stole them.
- In other words, he didn't win their hearts; he stole them with his evil guile and deception, which is how Absalom's will operate.

- Be that as it may, the narrative here does not give record how deeply hurt David is by what Absalom and Ahithophel do to him.
- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the most devastating dynamics when it comes to Absalom's, it has to be this
- Not only do people not understand, nobody has any idea how devastating it can be to the one who is on the receiving end of it.

Psalms 55:12–15 (NKJV) — 12 For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; Then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; Then I could hide from him. 13 But it was you, a man my equal, My companion and my acquaintance. 14 We took sweet counsel together, And walked to the house of God in the throng.

Psalms 41:5–9 (NKJV) — 5 My enemies speak evil of me: "When will he die, and his name perish?" 6 And if he comes to see me, he speaks lies; His heart gathers iniquity to itself; When he goes out, he tells it. 7 All who hate me whisper together against me; Against me they devise my hurt. 8 "An evil disease," they say, "clings to him. And now that he lies down, he will rise up no more." 9 Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.

14 So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword." 15 And the king's servants said to the king, "We are your servants, ready to do whatever my lord the king commands." 16 Then the king went out with all his household after him. But the king left ten women, concubines, to keep the house. 17 And the king went out with all the people after him, and stopped at the outskirts. 18 Then all his servants passed before him; and all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had followed him from Gath, passed before the king.

- What David does here is just one of many examples of his heart for God in that he doesn't want Jerusalem to suffer needlessly.
- The reason being is that he knows were he to stay in Jerusalem that it would be a bloody battle and many innocent may perish.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest David is even concerned for those who are not so innocent, those who've abandoned him.

Adam Clarke - "Behold a king, the greatest that ever lived, a profound politician, an able general, a brave soldier, a poet of the most sublime genius and character, a prophet of the Most High God, and the deliverer of his country, driven from his dominions by his own son, abandoned by his fickle people."

- Notice that the six hundred men, who had followed David from Gath, are still demonstrating their loyalty to him during all of this.
- From my own personal experience, I can't even begin to tell you how encouraging it can be when people remain loyal to you.
- I suppose in a way it shouldn't come as any surprise that these men remained loyal, given that they know who David really was.

One commentator of this said, "These men comprised David's personal bodyguard. The Gittites faithfully followed him from the time he lived among the Philistines. These men who were faithful to David before he became successful also stuck with him when his success seemed to fade away. ...It is remarkable that in this defining moment of his latter reign, foreigners rallied around David. It is more remarkable—and tragic—that his own countrymen and his own family were nowhere to be found.

- To me this begs the questions of why it is that some remain loyal while others you think would be loyal turn against you instead.
- The only answer I can come up with from my own experience is they are deceived into believing that God is through with you.
- In other words, as the fair whether friends, if you will, they will abandon you because they don't want to go down with the ship.

In A Tale of Three Kings, a young man comes to one of David's mighty men to hear about who David really is, "As far as David having authority: Men who don't have it talk about it all the time. Submit, submit! That's all you hear. David had authority, but I don't think that fact ever occurred to him. We were six hundred no-goods with a leader who cried a lot. That's all we were!"

- Actually, this brings up another question of whether or not David's men, or even David for that matter, think this is how it ends.
- It seems David's decision to flee from Jerusalem may've been because he was afraid Absalom might succeed in killing him.
- The reason I mention this is because of the Psalms in which David wrote about how fearful and terrified he was because of this.

Psalms 55:4-9 (NKJV) — 4 My heart is severely pained within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. 5 Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, And horror has overwhelmed me. 6 So I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. 7 Indeed, I would wander far off, And remain in the wilderness. Selah 8 I would hasten my escape From the windy storm and tempest." 9 Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues, For I have seen violence and strife in the city.

In A Tale of Three Kings, Gene Edwards captures the fear of Absalom's evil plan being met with success writing, "Not all will be willing to go along. Will he still be determined to put all his dreams into being? If so, then Absalom has but one recourse: dictatorship". ... "If Absalom gains the throne, may heaven have mercy... young Absalom will make a splendid Saul... For in every way but age and position, Absalom is already Saul".

19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why are you also going with us? **Return and remain with the king.** For you are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place. In fact, you came only yesterday. Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go I know not where? Return, and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth be with you." But Ittai answered the king and said, "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be." So David said to Ittai, "Go, and cross over." Then Ittai the Gittite and all his men and all the little ones who were with him crossed over. 23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over. The king himself also crossed over the Brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the wilderness.

- What David does here is very interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that he is giving Ittai a way out of this.
- This commitment of Ittai's loyalty to David is like Ruth's commitment of loyalty to Naomi, such that both of them were Gentiles.
- Moreover, both made commitments of their own volition knowing full well that to do so might in fact cost them their very lives.

Charles Spurgeon connects the dots with our commitment of loyalty to our greater than David, Jesus the Christ, saying, "If Ittai, charmed with David's person and character, though a foreigner and a stranger, felt that he could enlist beneath his banner for life—yea, and declared that he would do so there and then—how much more may you and I, if we know what Christ has done for us, and who He is and what He deserves at our hands, at this good hour plight our troth to Him and vow, 'As the Lord liveth, surely in whatsoever place my Lord and Savior shall be, whether in death or life, even there also shall His servant be.' "

24 There was Zadok also, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar went up until all the people had finished crossing over from the city. 25 Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place. 26 But if He says thus: 'I have no delight in you,' here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him." 27 The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Are you not a seer? Return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. 28 See, I will wait in the plains of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me." 29 Therefore Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem. And they remained there.

- What David does here is similar to what Moses did in Numbers 16 when his cousin Korah launched an Absalom style rebellion.
- More specifically, putting his fate into God's hands by letting Him decide whether or not he is to be removed from his position.
- While both Moses and David remain in the position to which God had called them, they still had to lay everything on the altar.

30 So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. 31 Then someone told David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!" 32 Now it happened when David had come to the top of the mountain, where he worshiped God—there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head. 33 David said to him, "If you go on with me, then you will become a burden to me. 34 But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I was your father's servant previously, so I will now also be your servant,' then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me. 35 And do you not have Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? Therefore it will be that whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall tell to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. 36 Indeed they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send me everything you hear." 37 So Hushai, David's friend, went into the city. And Absalom came into Jerusalem.

- It's interesting to note that the chapter ends with David's ascent of the Mount of Olives, which were the same as Jesus took.
- When Jesus walked from the Last Supper to the Garden of Gethsemane, He would basically take the same route as David did.
- One commentator noted that both David and Jesus suffered for sin; Jesus suffered for our sins but David suffered for his own.

G. Campbell Morgan, "In light of all the facts it is almost certain that the tears David shed as he climbed Olivet, were rather those of humiliation and penitence, than those of self-centered regret. For Absalom there was no excuse, but David carried in his own heart ceaselessly the sense of his own past sin."